

GERMANY—VIA MUNICH, PRAGUE AND BERLIN

THIS IS A TRIP FILLED with churches, castles and half-timbered houses, through mountains, plains and pristine farmland. The itinerary takes you from Munich to the “Romantische Strasse,” or “Romantic Road,” to towns like Würzburg and Rothenburg ob der Tauber. It’s a route favored by Romans, crusaders and pilgrims. These are towns where the 500-year-old Rathaus, or town halls, are perfectly preserved centerpieces. Places that are far from museum pieces but still have the look of the Middle Ages. At the end of the road, you go east, across to Nürnberg and then over the Czech border to Prague. Here in the cradle of the Velvet Revolution, you can see why this city has become such a draw for young Americans. Then carry on to the architectural showpiece that is Dresden and eventually end in Berlin. This is the reborn and rebuilt city that will carry Germany into the 21st century. Along the way, there are charming hotels tucked into period buildings. Some of Germany’s best wine, hearty food and most delicious beer also await you.



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(Mileage is estimated from each preceding city or site. Before you begin your trip, please note: For space reasons, we could not provide the most detailed map with this brochure. We recommend the use of **Michelin Map #984 Germany** in conjunction with this guide.) To order Michelin maps, call 1-800-223-0987.

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MUNICH—Begin by flying to Franz-Josef-Flughafen Airport and then consider staying for a few days. Munich, the city of BMWs and beer, is a "millionendorf," literally a village of a million or so people. You can see masterpieces by Albrecht Dürer and Leonardo da Vinci at the Alte Pinakothek, check out the high-fashion emporiums along the Maximilianstrasse or stroll in the English garden, Munich's famous city park. Even if you're not here during Oktoberfest, there are beer gardens where Lederhosen and feathered hats are still worn, Bavarian-style brews reign supreme and the Weisswurst is the best.

41 miles

AUGSBURG—While Augsburg's medieval appearance has been carefully restored, it's not museum-quiet. The cobbled Ludwigsplatz is a lively gathering place in this university town, and it's transformed into an open-air cafe during the summer and a Christmas market in December. Bordering it is a Renaissance Rathaus from 1620, arguably Germany's finest secular Renaissance building. Inside, the Goldener Saal, which boasts gold-leaf pillars and marble floor, is a reminder of when the Fugger banking dynasty made Augsburg one of the financial centers of Europe. By all means climb up the Perlachturm, a tower that rewards you with fine views from the top.

96 miles

FUSSEN—Sitting high above the Lech River, Fussen is a health resort that is the first stop on the Romantic Road. Originally settled by the Romans, it's a good base for exploring the nearby castles of Ludwig II. One of the closest is Schloss Neuschwanstein, the Disneyesque stage set that was easily his most outlandish achievement.

135 miles

NÖRDLINGEN—Nördlingen prospered between the 14th and 16th centuries, when it held a Whitsun Fair. The good times disappeared, but you can thank that turn of events for preserving the town's medieval heart. Consequently, Nördlingen is one of the most popular stops along the Romantic Road. You can walk the entire circuit of the town walls, passing its towers and gates. The Marktplatz has a Rathaus that dates from Nördlingen's heyday. If you're feeling fit, climb the stairs of the Daniel Tower of the St. Georgskirche, the town's late-Gothic church. If you're spending the night, throw open your hotel window around ten so you can hear the town crier shout "So g'sell," or "All's well."

20 miles

DINKELSBÜHL Less toured than its neighbors, Dinkelsbühl is another well-preserved medieval town on the Romantic Road, with a fine wall and 17 watch towers. Located on the River Wörnitz, it's most dramatically

approached by going over the causeway called the Rothenburger Tor. Follow the Martin Luther Strasse to the central market square, the Weinmarkt, lined with early Renaissance town houses. The most spectacular of all is the 16th-century Deutsche Haus, a gem of half-timbered architecture. Pause at the Schranne, a 17th-century granary that's now the venue for festivals like the Kinderzeche. This is the town's most important celebration, held the third week of July. It marks an episode from 1632 when invading Swedish troops spared the town. Take time to wander into the Münster St. Georg church, with its spectacular vaulted ceiling. Then plan to walk the romantic ramparts of Dinkelsbühl at night, preferably in the company of the town's night watchman.

28 miles

ROTHENBURG OB DER TAUBER—Rothenburg ob der Tauber may well be Germany's best-preserved medieval town, a place of turreted fortifications, 24 towers and winding cobblestone streets. Tour the city's 14th-century ramparts to get a real sense of the town, a place of half-timbered buildings with gabled roofs, turrets and spires. Visit the Puppen & Spielzeug Museum, which boasts the largest doll and toy collection in Germany. The St. Jakobskirche is the town's splendid Gothic church. Inside you can see the Heiligblut or Holy Blood altar, carved by sculptor Tilman Riemenschneider to hold what were alleged to be drops of Christ's blood. Not surprisingly, it attracted legions of medieval pilgrims. The sloping

Marktplatz is dominated by the arched front of the Renaissance Rathaus, one of Germany's great Renaissance buildings. Don't miss the town's oddest attraction, the Mittelalterliches Kriminalmuseum, a medieval crime museum. Here are thousands of macabre devices including masks of shame, which are bizarre indeed.

40 miles

WÜRZBURG—Wine made this city, the terminus of the Romantic Road. The wine produced around Würzburg was consumed by German emperors and the rulers of Nürnberg and Rothenburg ob der Tauber. Nowadays, the wine is still brilliant and you can sample it throughout the city. Würzburg is also home of the Residenz of the Prince-Bishops, a palace that was intended to show that the Würzburg bishops could hold their own among such great European courts as Versailles. They did rather well, and the 18th-century splendor reaches its peak in the enormous ceiling fresco by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo. Afterwards, move on to the Marktplatz. It's little surprise that in this gastronomic center, there's a lively daily food market.

113 miles

BAMBERG Medieval monks referred to Bamberg as the capital of the world. But nowadays, it's lauded simply for its beauty. Despite the wars that raged around it, it was left virtually untouched. On its seven hills and the banks of the River Regnitz, which flows through its heart, there are marvelous buildings. Bamberg is, in fact, a crash course in European architectural styles, with medieval, baroque and rococo buildings. Visit the Altes Rathaus, which was built on a sandbar in the middle of the river between the Obere Brücke and the Untere Brücke. The heart of the lower town is the Maxplatz, dominated by Balthasar Neumann's Neues Rathaus. A daily market is held here and on the adjoining Grüner Markt. Don't miss the Klein-Venedig, or Little Venice area, a collection of medieval fishermen's houses. The Domplatz may well be Germany's most beautiful. On it sits the

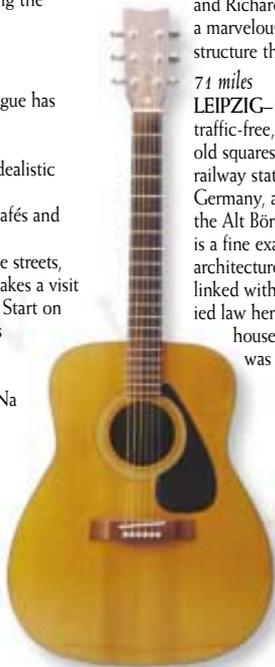


37 miles

NÜRNBERG—Shortly after its 11th-century origins, Nürnberg quickly rose to become the unofficial capital of Germany, taking advantage of its location at the intersection of major trading routes. By the late 15th century, the arts flourished here too, especially in the person of Albrecht Dürer. You can visit the Dürer-Haus, a timber-framed structure located below the walls of the castle, where the artist lived from 1509 until 1528. In the 19th century, Nürnberg rose to the fore of the pan-German movement, a time period detailed in the overwhelming collection of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum. It was also here, in a city that became synonymous with Nazi rallies, that war criminals were tried. Heavily damaged during the war, Nürnberg's medieval core was painstakingly reconstructed. Stroll through the Altstadt, which tends to be lively with street theater and music performances. And visit the Hauptmarkt, the commercial heart of the city and the main venue for weekly markets, including the famous Christmas market.

197 miles

PRAGUE—Since the fall of the Communist regime, Prague has enjoyed an incredible cultural renaissance, thanks to enthusiastic expats and idealistic locals. You can see it in the new galleries, cafés and clubs. But it's the backdrop of cobblestone streets, churches and bridges that makes a visit to Prague truly memorable. Start on Václavské náměstí, which is bounded by the Národní Muzeum and the shopping areas of Národní třída and Na Příkopě. Don't miss the art nouveau splendor of the Hotel Europa. The medieval streets of the old city, Staré Město, are a melange of churches, neo-Renaissance buildings and 500-year-old houses. You could easily spend a week in Prague, visiting the Malá Strana, or



Little Town, checking out the beautiful homes on Nerudova ulice and exploring Hradcany, the castle district.

92 miles

DRESDEN—This city has long been singled out as Germany's most beautiful, a place that escaped damage during the war until the fateful night of February 13, 1945. In a matter of hours, it was reduced to rubble in the Allied saturation bombing. Rebuilt in the Stalinist style, the city's spirit endured, and the restoration of its historic buildings continues even faster since reunification. Bisected by the River Elbe, the former capital of Saxony still has many architectural reminders of its glorious past. The Brühlische Terrasse is a fine terrace that looks over the southern banks of the Elbe. Nearby is the still-windowless Stadtschloss, an 18th-century masterpiece that is being carefully restored. The Zwinger, a complex of Baroque style pavilions, houses Meissen porcelain and other treasures. And visit the Semper Opera House, which hosted the first performances of Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* and Richard Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier*. It's a marvelous example of a 19th-century structure that was successfully revived.

71 miles

LEIPZIG—Much of Leipzig is traffic-free, the better to enjoy its gardens, old squares and shopping arcades. The railway station is one of the greatest in Germany, and the Alt Börse or stock exchange is a fine example of Baroque architecture. This is a city linked with the writer Goethe, who studied law here. The Kaffeebaum coffee house was one of his haunts.

100 miles

POTSDAM—Potsdam is the site of the Schloss Sanssouci, the summer home of Frederick the Great. It's probably the best example of the flamboyant rococo style in Europe, especially the Marble Hall and the Concert Room. It's perhaps best seen in the spring, when the trees and flowers are blooming. To avoid the inevitable crowds, visit on a weekday.

22 miles

BERLIN—This city has had a feverish reincarnation, with a building boom like no other in history. With incredible speed, Berlin is transforming itself into Germany's capital city. Beyond the new architecture, go window-shopping along the Kurfürstendamm and stroll on Sunday with the daschunds and their owners in the Tiergarten Park. Walk down the reborn Unter den Linden, the beautiful street that ends in the Brandenburg Gate. Check out the booming districts of Mitte and Prenzlauer Berg. Take in the Opera and other, less conventional forms of nightlife. And fly home assured you've glimpsed Germany's future.

HOTELS

The Bülow Residenz. Built in 1730, this is a fine example of palatial architecture. The Relais & Chateaux property is located in the center of Dresden, and its courtyard is a great place to unwind. Rähnitzgasse, 19, D-01097, Dresden. Tel: 49 351 800 30 Fax: 49 351 800 3100 From the USA: 800 735 2478

Romantik Hotel Augsburg Hof.

Located opposite the Mozart house, this hotel is located in a historic building, but the rooms have been updated. Auf dem Kreuz 2, D-86152, Augsburg. Tel: 49 821 343 050 Fax: 49 821 343 0555

Romantik Hotel-Weinhaus

Messerschmitt. While this hotel served as a wine tavern for 165 years, it's perhaps better known as the original home of pioneer German aviator Willy Messerschmitt. Oriental carpets and antiques set the tone. Lange Strasse 41, D-96047, Bamberg. Tel: 49 951 278 66 Fax: 49 951 261 41

Hotel Eisenhut. Located in the center of picturesque medieval Rothenburg, the Hotel Eisenhut is comprised of four houses from the 12th and 18th centuries. Rooms feature antique furniture with original paintings. Herrngasse 3-7, D-91541, Rothenburg o. d. Tel: 49 986 170 50; Fax: 49 986 170 545

Hotel Brandenburger Hof. This turn-of-the-century manor house is located near the Kurfürstendamm. While the exterior exudes Belle Epoque glory, many of the rooms reflect the Bauhaus style. The winter garden is a particularly nice attribute. Eislebener Strasse, 14, D-10789 Berlin. Tel: 49 302 140 50; Fax: 49 302 140 5 100 From the USA: 800 735 2478

Hotel Savoy. This luxurious small hotel has a Jugendstil facade. It was updated in the 1990s and there are still rococo touches, fine furnishings and large bathrooms. Take afternoon tea in the hotel's library. Keplerova 6, Prague 118 00. Tel: 02 2430 2430; Fax: 02 2430 2128

RESTAURANT

Halali. Here in Germany's best food town, the speciality at Halali is game. You'll see it on the menu and in the decor. Deer, duck, pheasant as well as forest mushrooms and fish appear, thanks to chef-owner Hans Mair. Schonfeldstrasse 22, Munich. Tel: 49 892 859 09

